



1320 Research Park Drive
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

MINUTES OF THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1. The State Conservation Commission meeting was called to order by Rod Vorhees, Chairman and Area V Commissioner at 9:03 a.m., Thursday, September 17, 2015, at the Pride of Kansas Building, Kansas State Fairgrounds, Hutchinson Kansas.

2. **ATTENDANCE:**

Elected Commissioners:

Ted Nighswonger, Area I Commissioner
Andy Larson, Area II Commissioner
Brad Shogren, Area III Commissioner
John Wunder, Area IV Commissioner
Rod Vorhees, Area V Commissioner

Ex-Officio & Appointed Members:

Eric Banks, State Conservationist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Dan Devlin, Director, Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE), K-State Research and Extension
Peter Tomlinson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Extension Specialist for Environmental Quality Agronomy Department, Kansas State University (KSU)

Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture Staff:

Greg Foley, Executive Director
Scott Carlson, Assistant Director

Guests:

Herb Graves, Executive Director, State Association of Kansas Watersheds (SAKW)

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3. ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

ADDITIONS:

6. c. Add district employee retirements and resignation.

Motion by Ted Nighswonger to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by John Wunder. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Motion by Brad Shogren to approve the August 10, 2015 minutes as mailed. Seconded by John Wunder. Motion carried.

5. COMMENTS FROM GUESTS:

- a. Herb Graves. – Herb discussed

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a. Conservation District Program Coordinator and Administrative Specialist hires – Greg Foley.
- b. Governor's Luncheon at the State Fair – Greg Foley.
- c. District employee retirements and resignations.

Woodson County – Gail Thornbrugh, retired. New employee is Marcia Menitt.

Kearney County – Julie Jones, retired. New employee is Staci Hahn.

Scott County – Monica Beeson, left for another job. New employee is Morgan Barnhardt.

Grant County – Lorraine Myers, retired. New employee is Brittany Seger.

Allen County – Kelli Kramer, left for another job. New employee is Colleen Riebel.

Marshall County – New employee is Leslie Holthaus.

Reno County – Jan Richardson, retired. New employee is Chloe Wilson.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a. Watershed Dam Construction Program funding recommendations for rehabilitation FY 2015 – Greg Foley – See Attachment A.

Motion by Brad Shogren to approve funding recommendation for Watershed Dam Rehabilitation as outlined in Attachment A. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

- b. Budget updates for the Fiscal Year 2017 – Greg Foley.

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8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review and assign commissioner duties for the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) Annual Meeting – Chairman Vorhees.
 - i. Preside at Monday SCC luncheon – Rod Vorhees.
 - ii. Give invocation at Monday SCC luncheon – Andy Larson.
 - iii. Introduction of Guest speaker to Monday SCC luncheon – Rod Vorhees.
 - iv. Governor’s Recognition of Conservation District Award winners during Monday Banquet – Governor Brownback if present, Secretary McClaskey if present or Dan Devlin.
 - v. Presentation of 20 year awards during Monday Banquet – John Wunder/Ted Nighswonger.
 - vi. Hold elections at Area meetings for the following:
 1. KACD Areas II and IV.
 2. SCC Areas I, III and V.
- b. Approve Commissioner and staff travel – Rod Vorhees.
 - i. Approve Katie Burke attendance at the Rosgen Geomorphology IV Course in Breckenbridge, Co. September 20th thru October 2nd, 2015.

Motion by Andy Larson to approve Katie Burke to attend the Rosgen Geomorphology IV Course in Breckenbridge, CO September 20th thru October 2nd, 2015. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

- ii. Commissioner attendance at the Governor’s Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas on November 18th and 19th at the Hilton Garden Inn & Conference Center, Manhattan, KS. Brad Shogren and John Wunder will attend and have Registration and Lodging paid for. - Greg Foley.
- c. Discussion on resolutions for KACD convention – Chairman Vorhees.

9. REPORTS:

- a. Agency Reports:
 - i. NRCS – Eric Banks. - See Attachment B.
 - ii. K-State Agronomy – Peter Tomlinson. October 9th at 9:30 am Sorghum Agronomy field day.

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b. Commissioner reports:

- i. Area I – Ted Nighswonger. NONE
- ii. Area II – Andy Larson – NONE
- iii. Area III – Brad Shogren. NONE
- iv. Area IV – John Wunder. NONE
- v. Area V – Rod Vorhees. NONE

c. Staff Reports:

- i. Greg Foley – NONE
- ii. Scott Carlson - Scott reported that Megan Green continues the office reviews throughout the State. He also reported on Agriland and staff attendance on the Kansas Geological survey tour.

11. ADJOURN:

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for November 22, 2015 at 2:00 pm at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Wichita Airport, 2098 Airport Road, Wichita, KS.

Motion by Ted Nighswonger to adjourn. Seconded by Andy Larson. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.



Greg A. Foley
Executive Director

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DIVISION OF CONSERVATION

WATERSHED DAM CONSTRUCTION: REHABILITATION

FY 2016

Watershed District	Site	Hazard	S/F/P	Cost/Share Requested	Cost/Share Cumul	SCOPE
Upper Marais des Cygnes 101	108	S	S	\$28,100.00	\$28,100.00	Riprap the front face of the dam
Allen Creek WD 89	124	L	S	\$20,580.00	\$48,680.00	Riprap the front face of the dam
Upper Marais des Cygnes 101	107	L	S	\$31,904.00	\$80,584.00	Remove and replace principal spillway
Pony Creek WJD 78	30	L	S	\$37,712.00	\$118,296.00	Riprap the front face of the dam and auxiliary spillway
Upper Marais des Cygnes 101	124	L	S	\$40,048.00	\$158,344.00	Remove and replace principal spillway
Delaware WJD 10	G-17	S	S	\$97,309.00	\$255,653.00	Upgrade from Low to Significant hazard class standards
Spillman Creek WJD 43 R	C-1	S	F	\$11,533.20	\$267,186.20	Replace end section of outlet pipe
Turkey Creek WJD 103	E-2	L	P	\$75,200.00	\$342,386.20	Riprap the front face of the dam & dilapidated fence
Rock Creek WD 45	75A	L	S	\$67,230.80	\$409,617.00	Const a berm to raise a section of fence outside FP
Pawnee WJD 81 (Sup)	5-17	H	P	\$42,088.46	\$451,705.46	Remove and replace principal spillway and reshaping auxiliary spillway
Mill Creek WD 98	IV-17	L	F	\$34,000.00	\$485,705.46	Remove and replace principal spillway
Thompsonville WD 6	FRD 2	L	F	\$25,420.00	\$511,125.46	Riprap with geotextile fabric the front face of the dam
LDM WJD 5	19	L	F	\$39,368.00	\$550,493.46	Remove and replace principal spillway
Delaware WJD 10 (*)	A-1	L	S	\$38,865.54	\$589,359.00	Remove and replace principal spillway

Funding Available = **\$589,359.00**

Total Requested Funding = **\$1,100,233.00**

(*) Requested Fund = **\$56,486.40**

S = Construction: State Funded

F = Construction: Federal Funded

P = Construction: Watershed Funded

NRCS HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES
for the
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
HUTCHINSON, KANSAS
September 17, 2015

OPERATIONS

- The following personnel changes have been made within the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supervisory positions:
 - Xiomara Tryban, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, has accepted the position of business tools specialist on the Financial Assistance Programs Division Staff, National Headquarters, and will be duty stationed in Fort Collins, Colorado.
 - Sheldon L. Hightower, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Hutchinson Area Office, has been detailed to the state office as acting assistant state conservationist for programs for 60 days.
 - Jarred C. Kneisel, Resource Conservationist, Hutchinson Area Office, will be acting assistant state conservationist for field operations, while Sheldon is on detail.
 - Peter A. Lefebvre was hired as the supervisory district conservationist for the Hays Management Unit. Peter comes from Gallup, New Mexico, where he was a rangeland management specialist.
 - Wyatt N. Sperry was hired as the supervisory district conservationist (SDC) for the Medicine Lodge Management Unit. Wyatt comes from Grants City, Missouri, where he was a soil conservationist.
- Mandatory LincPass (U.S. Department of Agriculture's personal identification verification system) usage was implemented in August. New employees and partner employees will be exempt until they receive a LincPass card. A quick advanced fingerprint report will be completed to start the process for the card, with a complete background investigation to follow.
- Computers were ordered the end of August to replace those going out of warranty. They are expected to arrive in early October and will then be deployed by Client Technology Services.
- Administrative staff will be transitioning to new roles on National Service Delivery Teams effective October 18. This is part of the Administrative Transformation that began over two years ago. Management and Strategy Staff will handle the NRCS administrative responsibilities that still need completed at the state level.
- The SDC Annual Meeting is set for October 14 and 15, 2015, in Salina, Kansas. The meeting will focus on leadership, with presenters on employee relations, workload analysis, and administrative transformation.
- We hope to receive our fiscal (FY) 2016 budget allocations in early October, depending on Congressional actions.

PROGRAMS

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

Kansas NRCS has 1 CIG preapproved application for \$22, 200 thousand dollars.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)

Kansas NRCS has a total of 283 2016-1 CStP renewal eligible applications for a total 653,000 acres.

Easement Programs

- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)**

Closing on FY2014 ACEP-WRE enrollments. Offers have been made on four FY2015 WRE applications. Currently have one restoration we are soliciting bids on.

ACEP-ALE FY2015—2 offers have been approved.

- **Easement Monitoring**

Kansas currently has 330 Stewardship Lands conservation easements. FY2015 annual easement monitoring has been completed. Currently, there are approximately 62 action items requiring follow-up by landowners, field office, and/or state office staff.

- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**

Restoration work has started on five WRP easements and we are currently soliciting bids for seven additional easements. Other landowner construction contracts for wetland restoration continue to be developed at the NRCS area and field office level as well as designs prepared at the state office level.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

NRCS is working with the city of Sedgwick to conduct a site evaluation and develop cost estimates on a potential non-exigency EWP project for streambank stabilization and debris removal due to flash flooding along Sand Creek in May and June.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP Landscape Initiatives

- Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative—in 2015, NRCS Kansas contracted with 5 farms for \$696,000 to improve wildlife habitat on 16,000 acres.
- Ogallala Aquifer—in 2015, NRCS Kansas contracted with 9 farms for almost \$1. 2 million to reduce aquifer water use and improve water quality.

Watershed Rehabilitation Program Activities

- The NRCS State Office Engineering Staff has completed Whitewater River Watershed Dam No. 19 Dam Assessment in Harvey County. The assessment will be reviewed with the watershed district board at their September meeting.
- Rehabilitation planning for five watershed dams in Kansas is progressing on schedule. Planning is being done through two separate contracts with architect and engineering firms. All 5 sites, involving 4 watershed districts, are located in Butler County. Each of the projects is currently working through public participation meeting as follow-up to the site inspections, natural resource inventories and geologic investigation that have been completed.

- Kansas NRCS is anticipating a national request for FY16 Watershed Rehabilitation Program funding assistance. Plans are to submit for several additional Dam Assessments as well as Design Phase funds for those presently involved with Planning Phase.

TECHNOLOGY

Engineering

- NRCS engineering staff continues to work on developing technical guidance for the GMD #3 RCPP project which will soon get underway.
- Shawn Sherraden, Civil Engineer, has joined the NRCS engineering staff in the Salina State Office. Shawn will be the lead in ag waste, on-farm energy, and streambank issues among other engineering duties. Welcome Shawn.
- K-State Salina gave a presentation at the August 20, 2015, Engineering Specialist Meeting dealing with Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) concerning their possible use for engineering activities in NRCS in Kansas.

Resources

- Biomass Crop Assistance Program technical assistance is being provided in southwest Kansas.
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up is scheduled for this winter and NRCS is working with the Farm Service Agency to develop the grassland portion of CRP.
- In August, numerous soil health workshops took place in Kansas (Salina, Hugoton, Newton, Emporia, Oberlin, Almena, and others). NRCS participated and provided assistance. Numerous producers were involved in these workshops.
- NRCS has fully deployed Toolkit 8 throughout Kansas.

Soils

- The annual refresh for the official soil survey database in Web Soil Survey is currently happening. There will be updates to all the counties in Kansas. Most of the soil survey changes are updates to the soil survey data. The new soils data should be available in Web Soil Survey shortly after the start of the new FY.
- David Kohake, Soil Scientist, will be joining the state Soils staff. David will be the lead for the State Wetland Team and will be a valuable asset to the wetland and soils program in Kansas.
- The 5-Year Cover Crop Soil Moisture study is at the halfway point. This study is looking at the effect of cover crops on soil moisture by comparing no-till fields with cover crops and without cover crops.

OUTREACH

USDA is once again leading the Feds Feed Families campaign. It will run through October 2. All Kansas USDA offices have been asked to participate with donations of non-perishable food items to a local food bank or donating fresh food directly to a local food bank.

NRCS staff will be present on each shift for the Kansas Conservation Partnership role in Agriland at the Kansas State Fair, with the exception of September 16.